

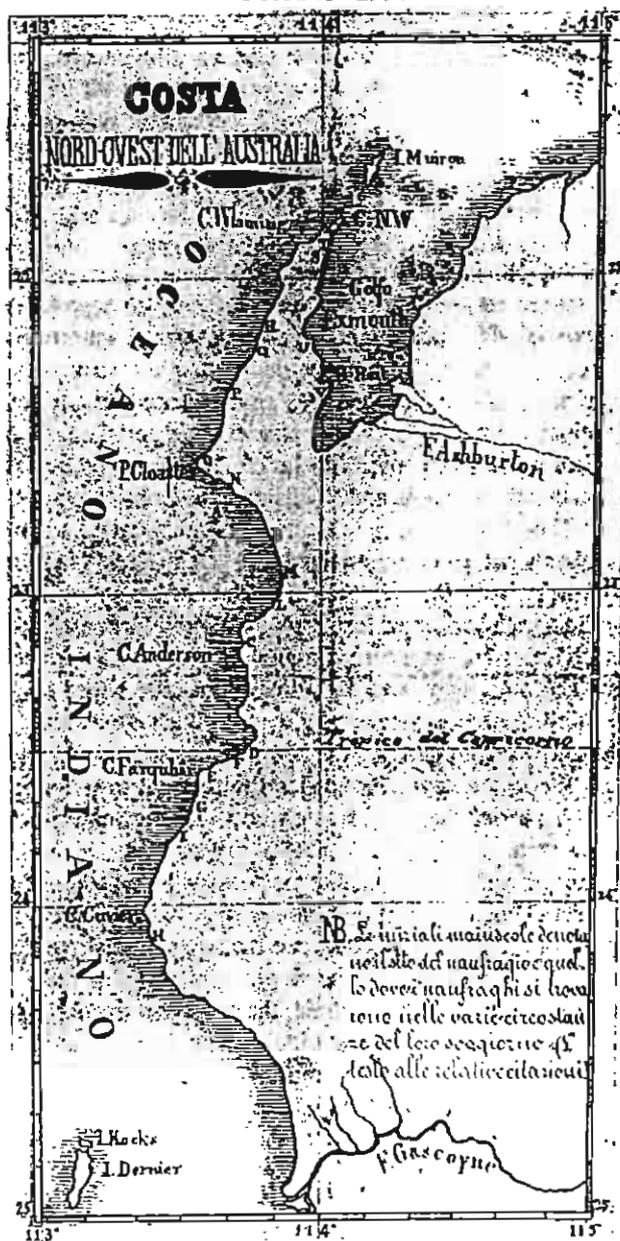
# WRECK INSPECTION REPORT

*Stefano* (1873-1875)

including the search for the Portuguese Despatch vessel *Correio Da Azia* (?-1816)

J. Green & M. McCarthy

October 1997



with contributions from  
N. Erskine, S. Lubkemann & A. Monte Sala

Report

Department of Maritime Archaeology, W.A. Maritime Museum No: 132

Cover Illustration: The area in which *Stefano* was wrecked (From Rathe, 1990: 13)

## Preamble

Though, not intending to visit these shores, the Austro-Hungarian barque *Stefano* (1873-1876) is particularly significant to the history of Western Australia. Its loss at Point Cloates on the North West coast in 1875, was followed by a period in which two young survivors (Baccich and Jurich) lived with the Jinirigudi and Payungu peoples of the North West Cape. Their account, as recorded and published by a priest Father Stefano Scurla, details the customs of a now-extinct group (Scurla, 1876). The survival of two teenage boys and their life among the Aboriginal people captured the imagination of the officials (Minutes: Court of Inquiry, 1876) and of the people in the Swan River Colony (e.g., *The Herald*, 6/5/1876). Modern Western Australians have been equally fascinated with it (e.g., Honniball, 1961; Smoje, 1978). More recently a popular account of the loss of the ship and its aftermath was produced by one of the survivor's grandchildren (Rathe, 1990).

While to an extent secondary to the complex social and historical issues involved, the location of the wreck of the *Stefano* has been a question in the minds of researchers, maritime archaeologists and historians for many years (e.g., Henderson, 1988: 175-183). Staff of the Department of Maritime Archaeology at the Western Australian Museum have continuously been on the lookout for clues to the whereabouts of this important post-colonial wreck and numerous searches were conducted in the 1980s during the excavation of the wreck of the American China Trader *Rapid*, which was lost at Point Cloates in 1811. In 1987 an account of the wreck of the Portuguese Despatch vessel *Correo d'Azia*<sup>1</sup>, on a reef south of Point Cloates in 1816 was obtained by the State Library (Da Silca Beltrao, 1818). This find added to the impetus to search the region (e.g., Henderson, 1987: 1-4; McCarthy, 1987:20-21; Green *et. al.*, 1992).

In the early 1990s the noted inventor Mr A. Monte Sala (AM), with family links to the region from which *Stefano* came, also sought the location of *Stefano*. He provided the Museum with a translation of Scurla's account and also sought to commission a search for the wreck. Given the demands on the Department of Maritime Archaeology's time and its inability to conduct a full-scale search for the wreck, Mr Sala agreed to the re-allocation of the funds to the Museum's volunteer wing, the Maritime Archaeological Association of Western Australia (MAAWA). Their search for the *Stefano* and attempt to retrace the steps of its survivors. This process began in 1993 and has continued on a regular basis (Warne, 1993; Cockram, 1996; Cockram and Warne in prep).

Mr Sala also commissioned a new translation of the original Scurla manuscript and has financed numerous studies into its contents and provenance (Melville-Jones, 1996), the Aboriginal language (Dench, 1996), the customs of the Jinirigudi and Payungu peoples (Moncrieff, 1996) and the flora and fauna (Kenneally in prep). These first appeared in a compilation entitled *Fr Stefano Scurla: The Stefano Castaways* (Sala, 1996). Archaeological studies based on a retracing of the steps of the survivors and the possibility that evidence of their passing may appear at Aboriginal sites along the way were also begun (Morse, in prep). Mr Sala has also conducted his own researches and has produced a compilation of contemporary sources relating to the loss of *Stefano* and to the history of other contemporary vessels and of the towns of Fiume and of Ragusa where he was born (Sala, 1997). Some of this material appears in the appendices following.

Over the past few years there have also been formal expressions of interest from leading politicians (notably the Hon. Phillip Pendall, MLA) in having the Museum search for the wreck of the *Correo d'Azia* as (Hansard, 5234). When a decision was made to proceed with a search for the *Correo d'Azia* under the auspices of the Maritime Museum and the newly-formed National Centre of Excellence in Maritime Archaeology, the location of the barque *Stefano* was also considered a desirable outcome for the reasons outlined above.

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<sup>1</sup>The vessel's name is spelt in various ways in the literature. *Correo d'Azia* is used in some contemporary accounts (e.g., Da Silca Beltrao, 1818). *Correio Da Azia* is used elsewhere and is favoured by some modern scholars.

What follows is an account of the finding of the *Stefano* site in the last few hours on the last day of the search program and a brief description of the site itself in preparation for a more extensive archaeological inspection.

## Technical Data

**Site Name:** *Stefano*

**Date Lost:** 27/10/1875

**Date of Inspection:** 9 April 1997

### Personnel:

J. Green..... OIC/remote sensing specialist/diver

G. Kimpton....Skipper/diver

M. McCarthy...Inspector of Wrecks /diver

R. Richards.... Diver/technician

### Approximate Location

On the seaward side of a broken reef 6 NM south of Point Cloates

### DGPS

22° 49.723S., 113° 43.167'E.

**Chart No:** AUS 745

**File No:** 117/91

**File Name:** *Stefano*

### Sailing Directions:

1) Sail from Point Cloates and head south-east along the coast, leaving the reef on which the *Rapid* lies just to starboard. When clear of the reefs head on a bearing of 150°M across Black Rock Passage and then proceed well inside the next reef south on the bearing given, keeping good lookout for the very shallow reef formations which abound just west of that course. Proceed with caution until opposite a conspicuous pinnacle 2.5NM due west of Carter Hill. This is marked in the latitude of *Stefano* on the chart as a pinnacle c.1m high above chart datum. Being most often around 2 metres out of the water and covered in white bird excreta, it is often visible from at least 1-2 NM away. Adjacent the pinnacle (which is surrounded by shallow and drying reefs), proceed west through the reef to the site, being constantly aware of very shallow and often isolated reef formations and the potential for dangerous swells throughout.

2) Leave Coral Bay, proceed via Stanley Pool and Chubjuwardoo Bay to a point opposite Carter Hill and the pinnacle noted above and proceed with caution as advised.

3) Proceed outside the Ningaloo Reef to a point at least one mile west of the pinnacle noted above. Proceed east to the site as conditions allow.

### Compass Bearing:

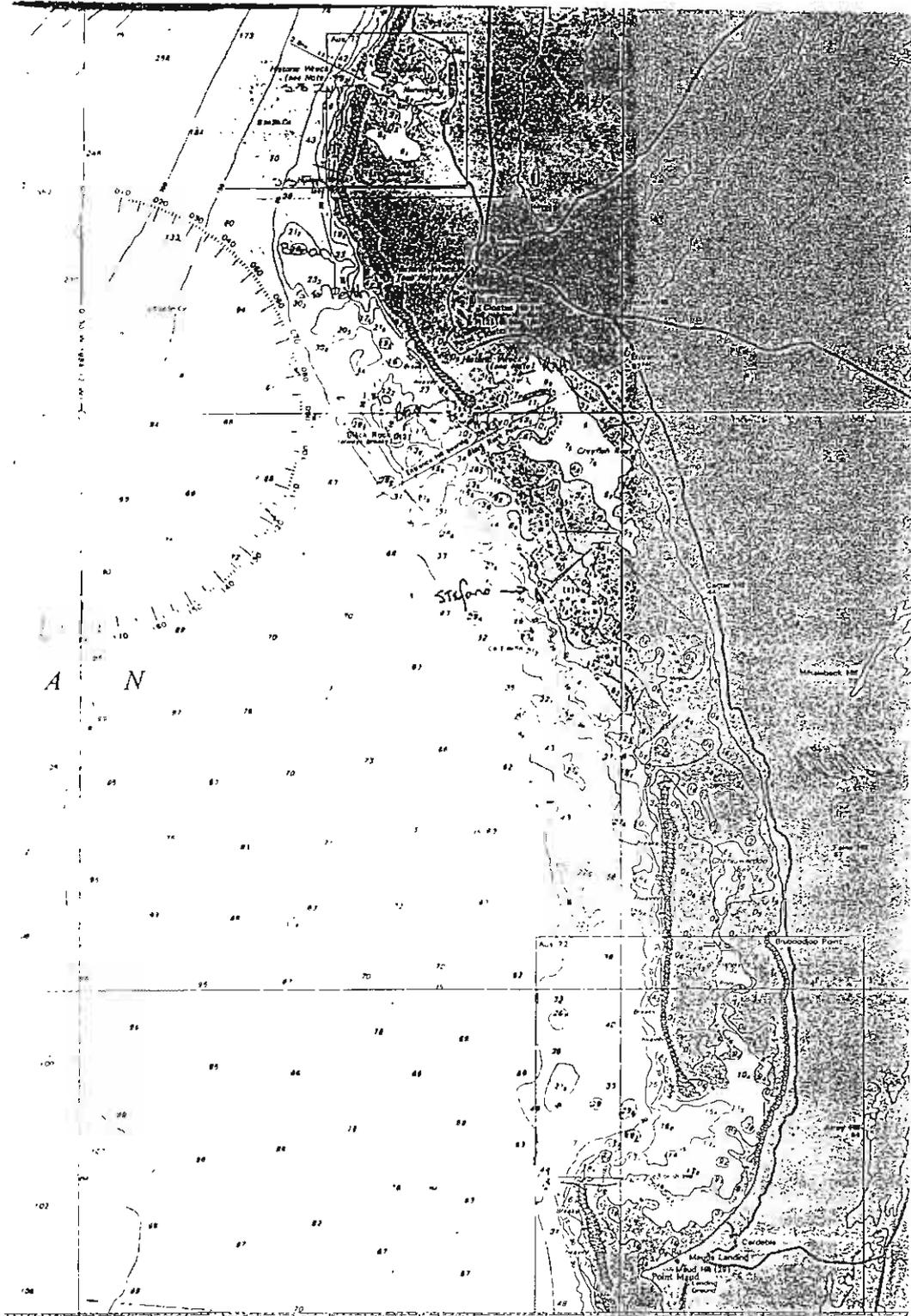
A. To pinnacle 083° M

B. To the Point Cloates Lighthouse 345° M

# Chart Excerpt showing access to Site:

From : AUS 745  
Western Australia: North West Cape to Point Maud.

(Access can be via Ningaloo Station or Coral Bay, which lies just south of Point Maud)



**Site Photographs:****Colour:**

STF /A/ 1-80 (Underwater)  
STF /B/ 81-120 (Above Water)  
STF 3/ 1-60 (Artefacts)  
STF/D/1-20 ( Maps, plans etc)

**Video:**

193: Stefano<sup>2</sup>

**Site Conditions on inspection:**

Sea and Swell: Smooth seas, light swell  
Surge: Nil  
Visibility: 20m  
Current: Imperceptible  
Sea-bed coverage: Coral

**Biological Data:**

The wreck lies on an active coral reef and its remaining structures are becoming covered with corals. Some are almost totally colonised

## Description of Site

The site inspection was hurried, given the constraints on the team's time, and as a result this report needs be considered in that light. A more detailed inspection is clearly required.

The wreck lies, bows to the south, on a submerged coral reef which varies in depth from around 5-10 metres deep. Two large anchors, each approximately 3 metres in length and a chain mound, dominate the bow area. The anchor's wooden stocks have disintegrated and the ironwork has been heavily colonised by the coral. In one instance an entire arm measuring 1.2 metres long from fluke to the anchor shank is totally buried in the coral.

From the bow area, the wreck stretches across the reef towards the north east, its remains easily recognised by numerous iron knees, the remains of a winch or windlass axle and other metallic fittings, all of which are heavily colonised by the coral. Throughout the reef are the remains of other heavily-concreted and barely-visible items, such as a small tank (for a water closet?) and numerous other, as yet unidentified, iron fittings and fixtures. There was no evidence of a ballast mound or indications of a cargo on the wreck. The stern area, which is recognisable by an iron davit, iron plate, a knee, mast fittings, and what appears to be a small boat anchor, lies approximately 55 metres on a heading north east from the bow and on the edge of a sand-filled gully.

The remains of the ship's rudder in the form of 5 pintles were located in a sand-filled gully 7 metres from the bows and approximately 8 metres outside the centre line of the ship on the starboard side. Small lumps of coal were concreted to one of the pintles and a thin layer of timber still adhered to some of the through bolt fastenings. A small bell, with coal embedded inside was found part-buried in the same area.

Twenty-seven metres from the bow, i.e. around midships, a navigation light lay buried in a sand-filled gully circa 10 metres from the centre line of the wreck to starboard. Copper alloy hull sheathing and a round deck-light was also found buried in this area.

One copper alloy dump or plank fastening was seen lying loose in the stern area.

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<sup>2</sup> Kindly provided to the Museum by Mr Max Cramer, who produced a video record after obtaining the DGPS position above.

## Contemporary illustration:

Showing the path of the survivors in alphabetic sequence, the location of the wreck which is correctly marked at Position 'A', the trek south to position 'H' and then back north to positions 'S' and 'T' where the boys were handed over to Captain Tuckey at position 'T' (From Rathe, 1990:13).



## Material Raised

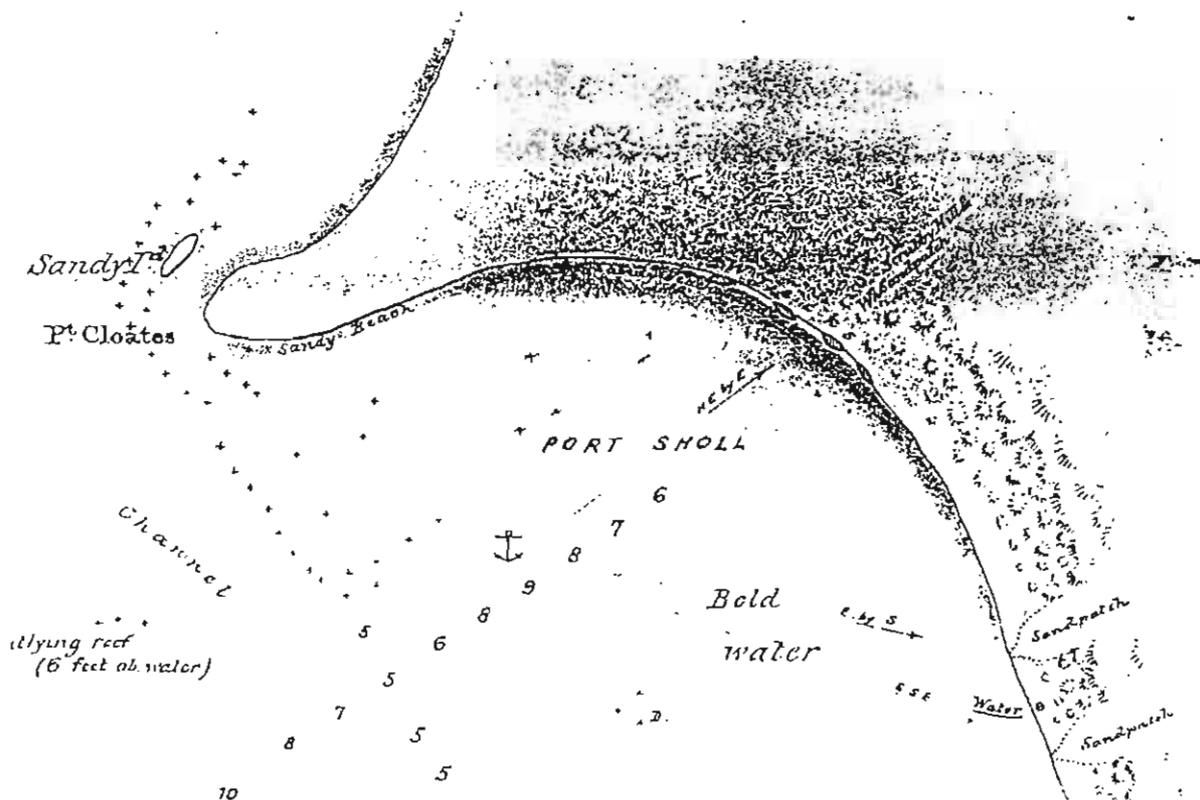
STF 1	Bell, remains of a belfry and sliver of brass
STF 2	Navigation light
STF 3	2 Sheathing fragments
STF 4	Fastening (Short bolt or dump)
STF 5	Deck light
STF 6-10	5 rudder pintles
STF 11	Coal sample (attached to pintles)
STF 12	Wood sample (attached to STF 6)

## Other indications of wreckage

Wreck material was recorded on the beach immediately south of Point Cloates in 1876 (Walcott, 1876). Some of this material were re-located by both the Museum team in 1997 and a Maritime Archaeological Association of WA (MAAWA) team in 1993 and 1995.

## Excerpt from Walcott's chart of 1876

showing wreckage believe to be from *Stefano* and other sites on the shore  
(From Henderson, 1988:179)



## Site Identification Comments

The c.55 metre long wreck is that of a large wooden-hulled sailing vessel, lying on its starboard side. The hull was constructed of part-iron knees and the c. 3 metre long anchors and the chain mound indicate that the vessel was of the mid to late nineteenth century and in excess of 500 tons. The ship was sheathed in a copper alloy and had some copper alloy fastenings, though only one fastening (most likely a plank fastening) was seen on the wreck. The rudder gudgeons were missing as were the ship's timbers generally. This indicates that much of the hull has broken up, carrying even the keel, keelson, deadwood, frames and many of the hull timbers, which contain such fastenings, off the site.

There is a general paucity of artefactual material and neither cargo or ballast are evident in any quantity. This indicates that the seas and swell have served to drive this material off the site and/or that ship had a relatively small complement, little or no ballast and/or a perishable or low-density cargo, vulnerable to the elements.

Coal found embedded within the bell (which carried no identification marks) and amongst the rudder gudgeons (which lie adjacent to the forepart of the ship) indicates that the vessel either used coal for cooking in the crew's quarters forward, or carried it as a cargo which was later strewn around the wreck by the seas. The presence of the rudder in the bow area indicate that it was unshipped during the wrecking process and that the vessel had either settled back onto it or swung around to lie upon it during the wrecking process. The navigation light, which was later deconcreted in the laboratory, is a starboard light and possibly of British make, given that it was marked with the word STARBOARD. No other indications of the vessel's nationality or identity were found.

.....  
Despite this paucity of evidence, indications are that the remains are those of the 858 ton, 51.9 metre-long, wooden-hulled Austro-Hungarian barque *Stefano* which was wrecked on an outlying reef southward of reef Point Cloates while carrying a cargo of Welsh coal in late 1875.

From a second-hand account of the loss of the vessel (Scuria, 1876; Sala, 1996 translation) it appears that *Stefano* was travelling at a rate of 9 knots and steering north by east when at 2.30 AM on 26 October 1875 it struck a reef about six nautical miles from shore. More sail was set in the hope of righting the ship and forcing it over the reef on which it was being pounded by the seas. The wind rose to gale force and this combined with the intermittent swell to drive the ship further into the shallows where the hull, which according to *The West Australian Catholic Record* (6/6/1876:7) was lying on its starboard side, was soon breached. The pumps failed to work and the order was given to abandon the vessel. The crew attempted to launch the boats though they experienced considerable difficulty due to the heel of the ship, the mounting seas and the terrible pounding. During these events the ship swung to finish in what was described as a relatively stable position, bows to the south, on its side. Some of the crew remained in the shrouds until daybreak until the mainmast fell and the ship began to break up. With the exception of two anomalous finds, these events and the details of the *Stefano* fit the remains found.

With respect to the first of these anomalies, i.e. the British starboard light, *Stefano* was surveyed and yellow-metalled in London in June 1875 and its hull and stores were passed by the surveyors as in first class condition (Henderson, 1988: 182). A British-made navigation light then could equally have been fitted when the ship was built in 1873 or as a result of the requirements of the London survey two years later.

The second anomaly is the lack of coal in the form of a cargo mound or wreckage plume. A plume had been predicted and its expected presence used as a tool in the visual searches. When none was found despite a complete search of the inside of the reef on which the *Stefano* was thought to have been lost, an examination of the remains of other nearby wrecks such as the 1400 ton iron-hulled ship-rigged vessel *Benan* (1875-1888) which also carried a cargo of Welsh coal, and the iron-hulled SS *Perth* (1863-1887) were made. These inspections produced a similar result i.e. a total absence of a coal wreckage plume and little if any coal on site or on the seabed adjacent either site. This proved especially surprising given the amounts originally carried on both ships. Substantial

sections of each of these two iron ships was located quite some distance off the respective wreck sites giving testimony to the strength of the seas in the area. It appears that the coal, being of light density, has been dispersed and the effect of the regular cyclones that affect the area needs be considered here. The *Stefano* survivors were unfortunate to experience one soon after they were wrecked, for example (Rathe, 1990).

## Wreck- site History

### (i) Contemporary Salvage:

From contemporary accounts it appears that the wreck broke up very quickly and it is expected that it produced few opportunities for salvage other than the recovery of materials blown ashore. It is known that substantial timbers were cast ashore just south of Point Cloates in the months following the loss of the *Stefano* (Walcott, 1876). Some of it was identified by Aboriginal people as coming from the wreck. These materials would have proved of considerable use to European settlers on board vessels sheltering in Black Rock Passage, then called Port Sholl. The founder of the Ningaloo Station, Thomas Carter has indicated that he used materials from a number of shipwrecks to build his first station shelters in the late 1880s for example. The owners of Ningaloo Station, Billie, Jane and the late Edgar Lefroy, have had in their possession a deck light identical to that recovered by the Maritime Museum team for decades. This has evidently been recovered from timbers found on the beach south of the homestead.

### (ii) Modern Salvage

Though the location of the site is correctly shown in the Scuria manuscript and in illustrations reproduced by Rathe (1990), the exact position of the wreck was lost until 1997 and as a result salvage of the site in recent times is not considered an issue.

### (iii) Circumstances surrounding the location of the site

The wreck was located on 9 April 1997, on a specific-purpose search designed to find both it and the Portuguese Despatch vessel *Correio d'Azia*. The team was led by Jeremy Green and it included Geoff Kimpton, Bob Richards and Mike McCarthy.

## Search Method

### Search Method

#### The *Correio da Azia* search (By J. Green)

The search for the *Correio da Azia* was an integrated archival research project and archaeological survey. Wrecked in 1816 off Point Cloates, she was a Portuguese advice boat bound for Macau. The survivors got to Macau, and a search party was sent back in a brigantine called the *Emillia*. The captain, Luis Antonio da Silca Beltrao, published a report in which he mentioned that on board the vessel were the captain and some of the crew of the *Correio da Azia*. The report which was published in Calcutta in 1818 deals largely with issues relating to the longitude and plotting of Point Cloates, which was at the time a notorious navigational danger. The account mentions, but does not locate, the exact position of the *Correio da Azia* site. An expert in Spanish archival research, Steve Lubkemann from the Anthropology Department at Brown University, was commissioned to do archival research in Seville to determine if there were any other accounts of the loss. A letter relating to the loss was '...made by Joao Joaquim de Freitas, Lt. Captain of the Naval Dept of Goa, Commander of the ship (galera) that wrecked named *Correio da Azia*, owned by Joao Nunes da Silveira, coming from Lisbon to Macau against weather, sea and wind, fire, shallows and coastal dangers and errors of Maps...' Both the documents mentioned above made reference to the site of the loss of the ship. Nigel Erskine, a

mariner and graduate of the Post Graduate Diploma Course in Maritime Archaeology was requested to complete a study of the contemporary astronomical and navigational issue relating to the documentary evidence (Erskine, 1997). This enabled the area of the loss to be defined with some certainty.

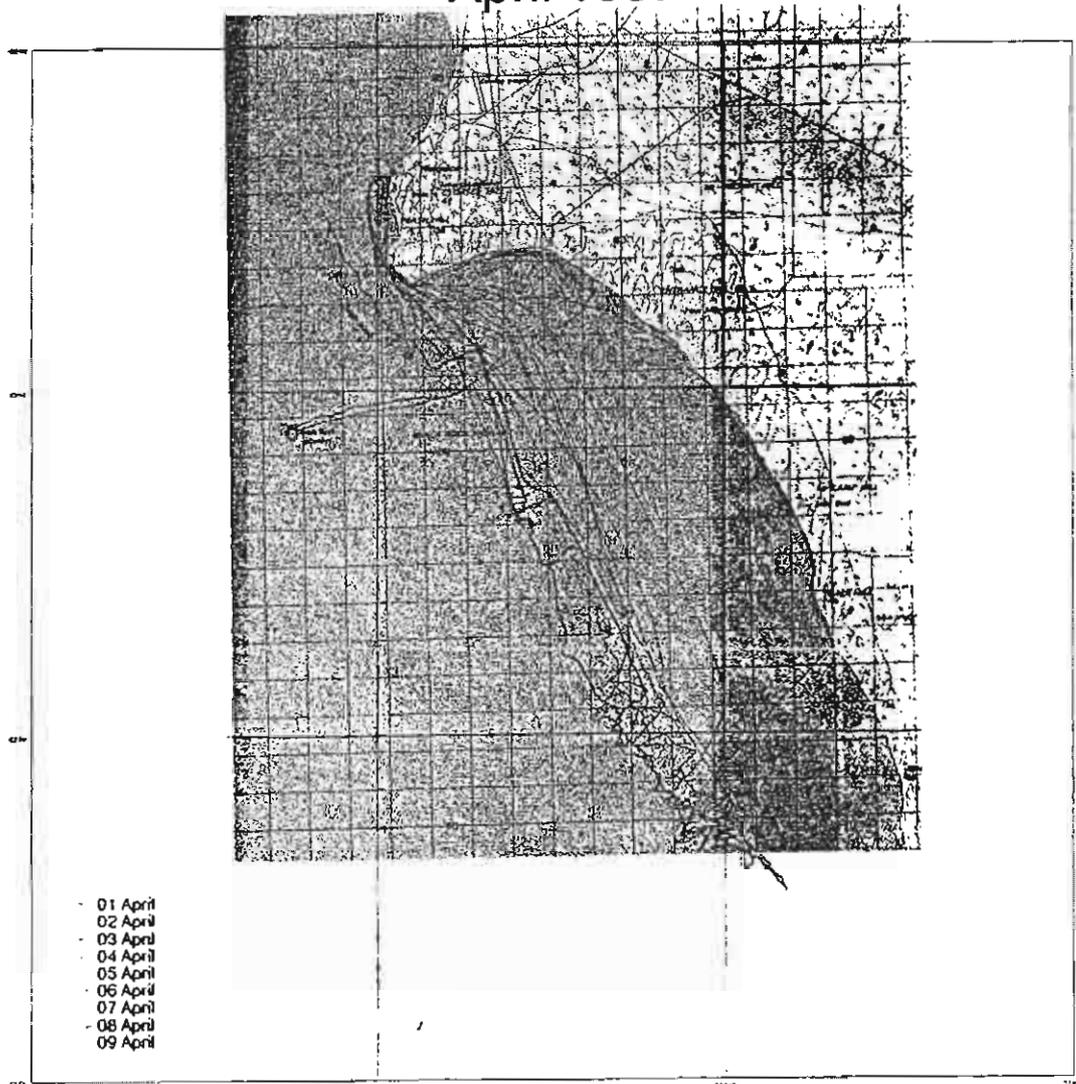
With all the relevant and available information a study was then made of the account of the loss. The description of the loss stated that '...a turbulence off the starboard of the prow [was seen]...ordering the hauling up of the *balina* [sail] all the wind it would give, it being [the wind] at the same time W, and determining at the same time to place the anchor immediately since it continued with its flukes overboard and a cable of 20 lengths extended from stern to bow, and seeing the said turbulence to continue off the prow *and just about to come about to the side* [unclear], the ship hit twice, continuing however always to make some way without hitting, and wanting to turn the ship aside and starting again to make way, we, making the due manoeuvres as also *setting out (unclear)* the prow sails, felicitously denoting [unclear --perhaps 'clear water'] to starboard and beginning even to make some way without there being seen any rough water off the prow, it once again hit and at the second [hit] its rudder failed and immediately the ship crossed in the sea and turned on its port side and filled with water.' Later the account mentions: 'so we stayed until the breaking of day, tied off to the masts of the same, unable to cast off to the side due to the many rocks that appeared out of the water...everything from bow to stern were rock heads out of the water, extending out to sea for over 1 mile...' The suggestion therefore is that the vessel struck a series of underwater reefs, an attempt was made to go about by dropping an anchor on the port side and then wearing about on the anchor and slipping it. During this manoeuvre, the vessel struck and was crippled. It then sank into water deep enough that the decks were below water and the ship's boat could tie up to the mast. All this suggests that the ship was lost in an area where there were numerous shallow rocks and reefs. This could not be in the southern part of the Ningaloo Reef, because the reef in that area is steep to. Examination of aerial photographs suggested that the most likely place was in the general area starting at the top end of the southern part of the Ningaloo Reef complex and extending northwards. Since the reef at this point runs NNW, forming a virtual barrier to vessels sailing north, this is likely to be the general area of the loss.

It was decided to use a variety of techniques to search for the site. The most important component of the search was a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) which recorded the position of the search vessel every second to an accuracy of  $\pm 2$  m (RMS). This position was constantly logged in a 'data logger' and could be examined at any particular time. In addition a graphics package was used on the computer so that the plot of each days run could be overlaid on the chart to assess the search efficiency. Initially a Magnetometer and a side scan sonar were deployed to assist in searching for the wreck. The side scan sonar proved to be ineffective in the area because the nature of the sea-bed was very rocky and hence it would be impossible to discriminate wreck features on the rocky sea bed. The magnetometer was a more promising option, however, there was at the time of the search a period of tropical thunderstorms in the area which made the operation of this instrument impossible. The indication was, however, that the region is relatively free of geomagnetic anomalies and under normal conditions the system would be very useful.

As a result of this situation, towed diver search was used to search for the site. This, as it turned out, was a very efficient system; the water was warm, allowing divers to be towed behind the vessel for long periods of time; the water was very clear, with visibility up to about 20–30 m. Two divers were towed a short distance behind the boat, off set from either side of the stern of the vessel. Originally it was hoped to search in a rectangular pattern, E–W or N–S. However the nature of the area made this impossible due to large numbers of small coral outcrops about 5 m in diameter extending throughout the survey area. As a result, the boat operator was to negotiate a search pattern, which at the end of each day was checked against the DGPS plot to ensure that the area surveyed had been adequately surveyed. This system proved to be remarkably efficient and lead ultimately to the discovery of the 1875 barque *Stefano* which was thought to lie in the northern part of the survey area.

The Track Plot Sheet  
Showing the path of the expedition boat and the areas of reef searched  
Produced by J. Green

*Correo da Azia–Stefano Survey*  
April 1997



### Assessment of Site Significance

(i) Archaeological: The wreck is that of a mid to late nineteenth century barque built on the Dalmatian coast. It is the only known example of this type in Western Australia. Though the seas and the composition of the sea-bed have served to leave few visible remains of the hull, bar the ironwork and some metallic fittings and fixtures, the wreck is of significance as an example of the shipbuilding industry at Fiume (Rijeka). Evidence of the crew's personal effects and other materials are expected to lie in the sand gullies on the starboard side and at the stern of the site.

(ii) **Scientific:** The processes of colonisation of a large structure by the coral reef is of interest in that the rate of colonisation and possibly the growth of sections of the reef can be determined.

(iii) **Educational, Recreational and Cultural:** The wreck provides a focus from an educational, recreational and cultural point of view due to its location on the Ningaloo Reef, its associations with the *Stefano* epic and the Payungu and Jinirigudi peoples who saved the two survivors.

## **Management considerations**

(i) **Natural Forces:** If left undisturbed, the remains are expected to suffer little change, other than slow colonisation by the corals.

(ii) **Present and future human forces:** The wreck of the *Stefano* lies on one of the most pristine, complex and attractive coral reef formations seen by members of the search team. The wreck has been completely broken up, and as a result, it will not serve to provide much of a visual experience for recreational divers in its own right. There is considerable interest in the *Stefano* story, however and divers are expected to be keen to visit the wreck for this reason alone. Apart from the sea-life and corals, their expectations of the wreck itself may be unrealistic, causing some to seek to fossick in the sand gullies for loose material. This tendency will need to be monitored by charter operators.

(iii) **Projected General site Stability** in view of the above  
With the exception of projected diver interference by fossicking, the wreck is considered very stable.

## **Recommendations**

1) The wreck is an historic site under the terms of the Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act, 1976* and it should be monitored regularly.

2) The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) should be informed of the location of the site and, as managers of the reef system on which the site lies, they should be invited to assist in the management of the wreck.

3) The position of the wreck should be promulgated to local charter operators through CALM and they should also be invited to participate in its monitoring.

4) The Department of Maritime Archaeology should revisit the site as soon as possible to

- i) complete the photographic and video record
- ii) finalise the site plan and record all details
- iii) excavate the sand gullies and remove loose attractive material in the context of inquiry into the *Stefano*, its crew and their accoutrements.
- iv) produce a bathymetric map of the region, identifying salient features that led to the loss of the ship and searching for wreckage swept of the site amongst the reef structures
- v) continue the investigation of material located onshore
- vi) continue to support the current MAAWA initiatives to search for evidence of the trek of the *Stefano* survivors.

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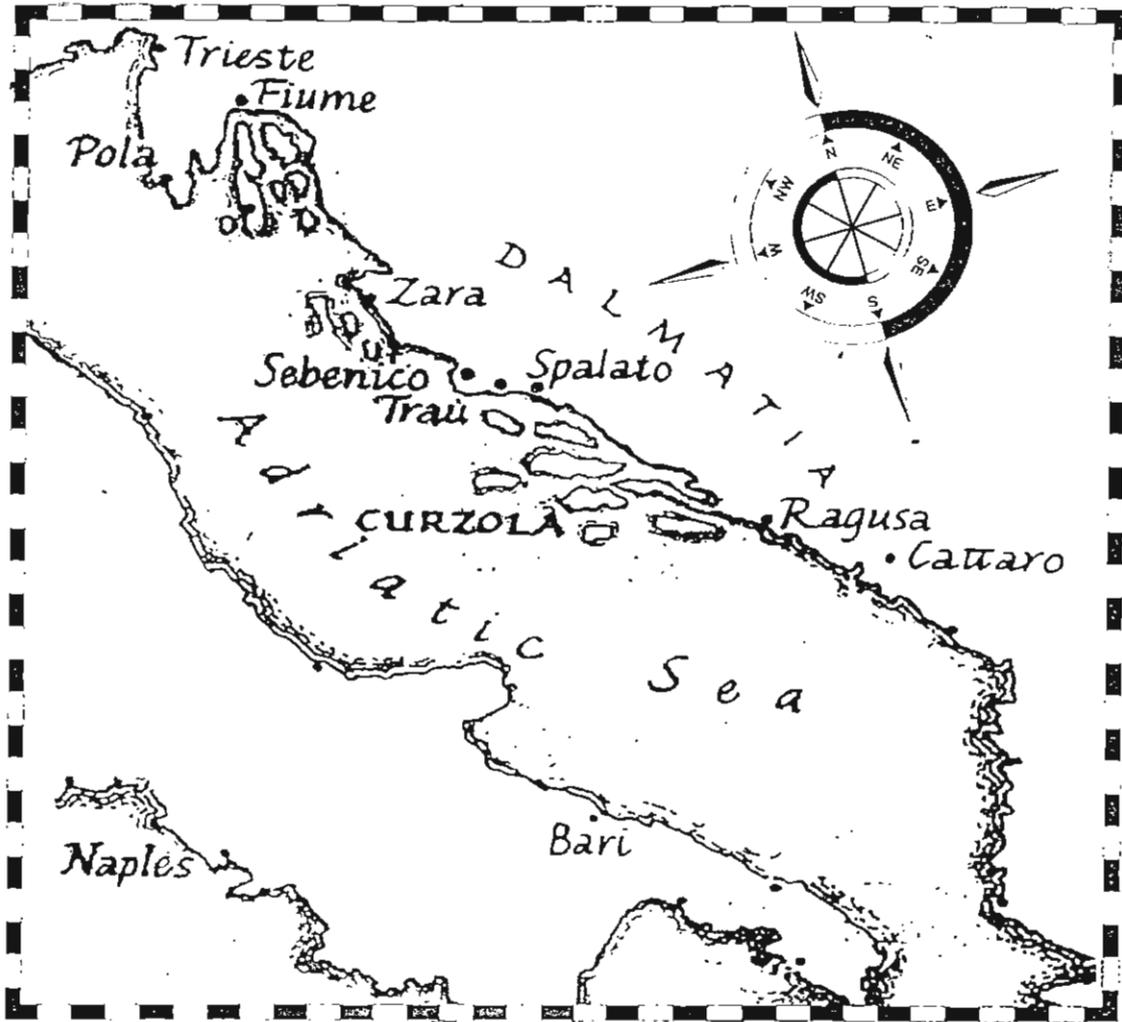
## Appendix

Excerpts from an analysis of the antecedents of the Barque *Stefano* and its crew, together with early accounts of its wrecking.



## Appendix

Excerpts from an analysis of the antecedents of the Barque *Stefano* and its crew, together with early accounts of its wrecking. Compiled by Mr A. Monte Sala AM, for the information of the WA Maritime Museum (Sala, 1997).

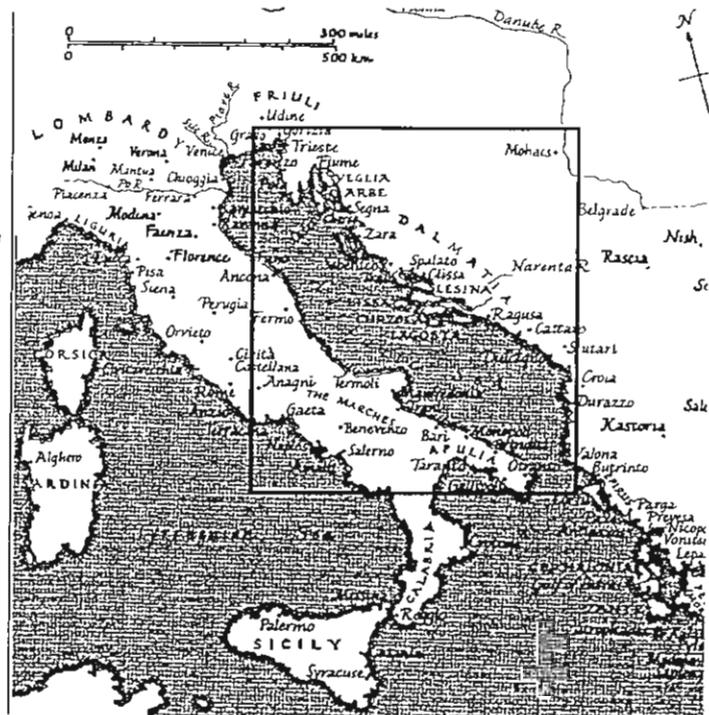


### NAME CHANGES

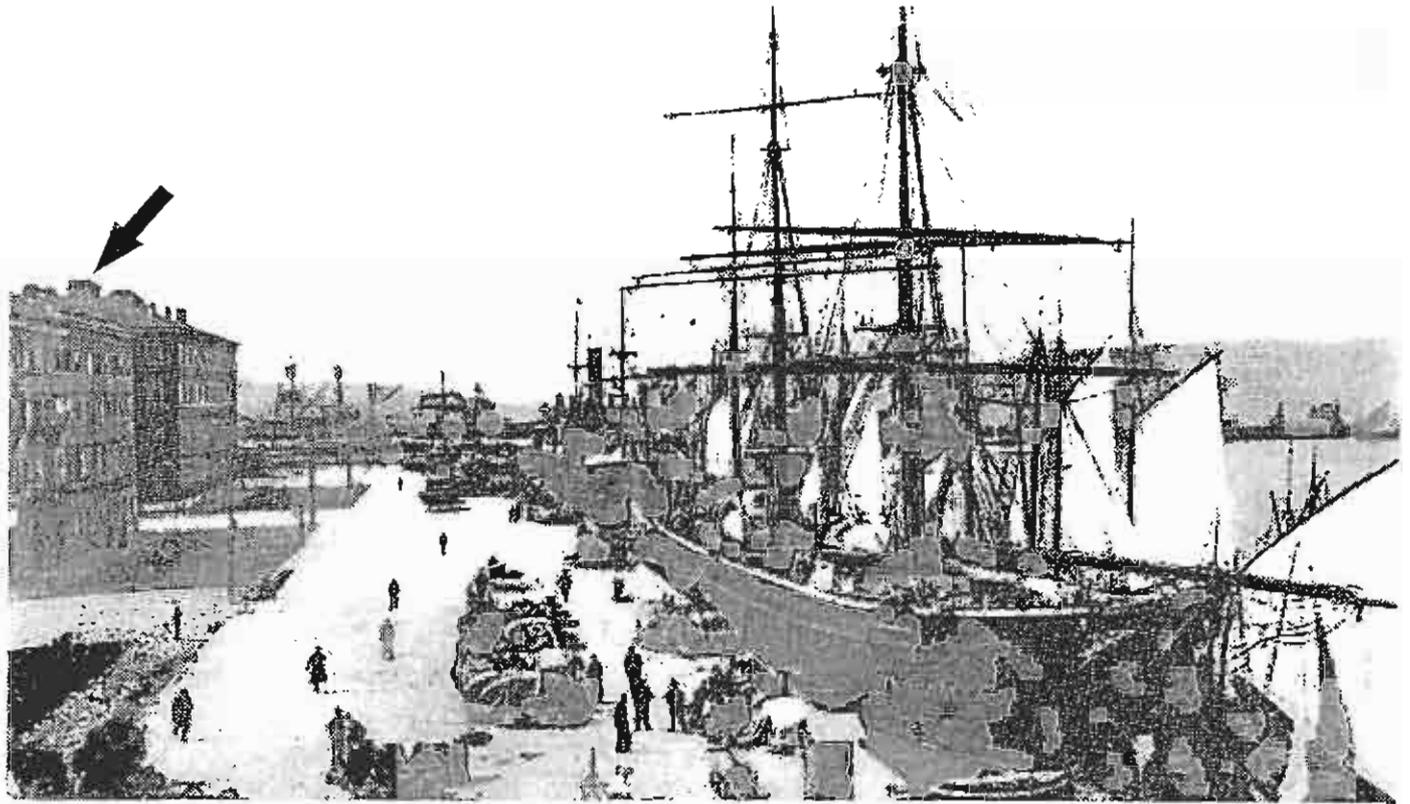
RAGUSA now Dubrovnik  
Its name was changed in 1920

The names of towns listed below  
were changed after W.W.II (1945)

POLA,	now Pula
FIUME	now Rijeka
ZARA	now Zadar
SEBENICO	now Sebenic
TRAÙ	now Trogir
SPALATO	now Split
CATTARO	now Kotor
CURZOLA	now Kurcola



# THE BARK STEFANO



THE BARK STEFANO MOORED IN THE PORT OF FIUME

Note the steam ship behind it. The building at left designated with an arrow belonged to the Baccich

NAVIGLIO							PROPRIETARIO			CAPITANO
NOME e segnale distintivo	Specie	Tonell.	Costruzione		Patente e Scont.		Carati	Nome e Cognome	Domicilio	Nome e Cognome
			Luogo	Anno	Data	N.°				
<i>Stefano . . . J R S M</i>	Bk.	857	Fiume	1873	3/1/74	22	16 3 2 2½ 1½	Baccich Nicolò . . . . Cunradi Egone . . . . Lemuth Francesco . . . . Covacevich Antonio . . . Covacevich Francesco . .	Fiume . . Sabione. .	Miloslavich Biagio

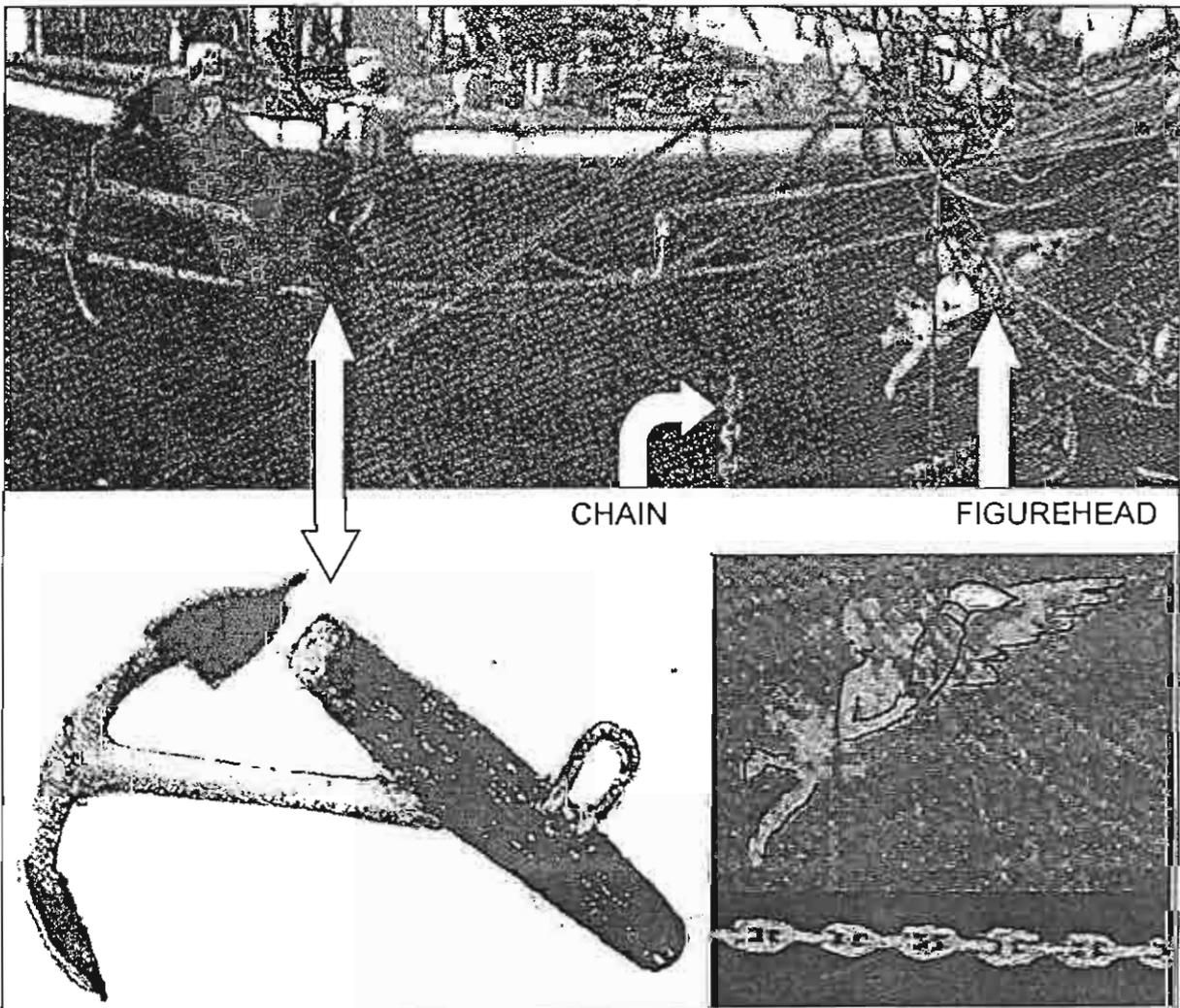
The table above gives details of the Stefano as follows:

*Stefano* - bark - 857 tons - built in Fiume in 1872 - licence No 22 issued on 3/1/74 - owners:

Baccich Nicolò	carats (shares)	16	resident of Fiume
Cunradi Egone	do	3	do
Lemuth Francesco	do	2	do
Covacevich Antonio	do	2½	Sabioncello
Covacevich Francesco	do	1½	do

Captain      Miloslavich Biagio

# DETAILS OF OBJECTS AT THE PROW OF BARK PRESUMED TO BE THE **STEFANO**



CHAIN

FIGUREHEAD

*THIS ANCHOR AND THE CHAIN SHOWN ABOVE HAVE BEEN ENHANCED AND RETOUCHE. THE FIGUREHEAD HAS BEEN ENLARGED AND PROVIDED WITH AN OUTLINE TO REVEAL OBIECT ASSUMED TO BE AN AMPHORA.*

**W R E C K**  
OF THE  
Austrian Ship "STEPHANO,"  
ON THE  
**NOR' WEST COAST.**

By the cutter, *Jessie*, Tuckey, master, which arrived from Port Walcott, yesterday, we learn a sad tale of shipwreck. The following are the particulars as related by one of two survivors who were picked up by the *Jessie*:—The *Stephano*, ship, 1300 tons, Captain Biagio Miloslavich, of Furma, Austria bound from Cardiff to Hong Kong, loaded with coals, struck on the Point Clotes Reef, about 5 miles off the coast, between Cape Couvier and Nor' West Cape, at 2 o'clock, on the morning of the 27th October last; the ship was carrying studding sail at the time of her striking the reef, and in consequence she almost immediately heeled over on her starboard side and began to break up. Out of the crew, seventeen in number, the Captain and six of the seamen were drowned, the remaining 10 including the chief officer, managed to reach land on pieces of timber. The mate knowing from the Charts of the Shark's Bay Settlement, they all started to walk there, but after accomplishing about a hundred miles, and enduring great suffering from the want of water principally, they returned to the beach from whence they started. The survivors state that they subsisted on shell fish, and that the others died one by one of starvation,—the last poor fellow on the night of Christmas day. Shortly after, some natives came up and treated the other two kindly giving them fish and turtle and in consequence of their deplorable and exhausted state, leading them by the hand through the bush some quarter of a mile to the water holes. The natives then took them across to the Nor' West Cape, where Tuckey picked them up. Both the survivors are natives of Austria, very intelligent; one a boy of 17 years: their names are Michele Baccich and Giovanni Jurich.

# THE WEST AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC RECORD

June 6, 1876

## THE LOSS OF THE *STEFANO*

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The following further particulars of this most melancholy event have been furnished by Mr. John Vincent, with whom the two rescued survivors are staying, and who is acquainted with the Slavonian dialect which they speak, and who acts as their interpreter. The "*Stefano*," a barque of 1300 tons register, owned by Niccolo Baccich, of Fiume, in Austria, sailed from Cardiff, Wales, on the 30th July, 1875, for Hong Kong, with a cargo of coals. The crew consisting of the master Biagio Miloslavich, Carlo Costa, first mate, Martino Ossoinak, second mate, Giovanni Lovrinovich, Gregorio Pavisich, Fortunato Bucich, Gueseppe Peranich, Domenico Antoncich, Baldassare Yacassinovic, Tommaso Dedoil, Paolo Radovich, Diodato Vulovich, Niccola Brajivich, Giovanni Jurich, Matteo, seamen, Michele Baccich, midshipman, and an English lad from Stafford, Henry Grice or Grosse. The voyage was without a casualty from the time of leaving till the ill-fated vessel struck upon the reef. The weather had been favorable throughout the passage and no danger whatever was anticipated at the time she struck. On the 26th of October, land was seen, but the ship was considered at a safe distance; on the 27th, about 2 a m, the vessel steering a North by East course and with all sail set, suddenly struck with tremendous force upon a sunken reef.

## THE LOSS OF THE *STEFANO* & *GEM*

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We take from the *Herald*, an account of the loss of the "*STEFANO*" and "*GEM*." The particulars as narrated in each case are most thrilling and melancholy. We are delighted to notice Mr. James Pearce—Editor of the Fremantle "*Herald*"—has so kindly exerted himself in getting up an entertainment for the benefit of the survivors of the "*STEFANO*," and also in aid of the necessitous relatives of those lost by the foundering of the "*GEM*." The entertainment will take place on Thursday evening, the 8th of June, and we heartily wish it success.

Before anything could be done she heeled right over on her starboard beam and began to fill. No report was made by the look-out of broken water before she struck. The master and crew, not knowing anything of the locality, took refuge in the rigging for the night and anxiously awaited daylight. During the night the sea broke completely over the vessel and washed away three of the seamen, Gregorio Pavisich, Baldassare Vacassinovic, Paolo Radovich, Matteo, and the boy Grice. At daylight a boat was got clear and the master, the second mate, the midshipman, and a seaman got into her. She capsized in the breakers and the master, the second mate, and the seaman was drowned; the midshipman clung to the keel of the boat and was washed ashore. The first mate got ashore on a ladder, and the remainder of the crew on spars and pieces of the wreck. For several days the party, consisting of ten persons, lived upon raw shellfish and whatever in the way of eatables was washed ashore from the wreck. They had little hope of ever being rescued and were in great dread of the natives, whom they believed to be cannibals. As everything, including the charts, had been lost, they had no means of ascertaining on what part of the coast they were, or in what direction lay the nearest settlement. After several days of great suffering, the natives came down to the beach, and much to the surprise of the cast-away sailors, made overtures of friendliness which after some hesitation on the part of the shipwrecked seamen, was accepted. The natives showed them where water could be obtained, caught fish and cooked them for them, and completely relieved the party of all fear on their account. Among the *débris* of the wreck washed ashore, the natives picked up a chart of the West Coast of Australia, by which the party were enabled to make out pretty well where they were, and after consultation it was determined to make an attempt to get to Shark's Bay. The party started southwards and after six days travelling reached Cape Cuvier. Finding no water and being afraid to proceed, they returned to

the scene of the wreck which they reached in safety. For some six weeks after their return the party lived on rock oysters and suffered intensely from want and exposure. On Christmas day two of the men died, and a few days after six more, including the first-mate, succumbed to their sufferings. The two remaining survivors Baccich and Jurich, who now despaired of ever being rescued, determined to join the natives and travelled inland for this purpose. They joined the tribe with which they were already acquainted, and found them extremely hospitable while they remained with them. They had long despaired of ever being rescued from their pitiable condition, when relief came in a most unexpected manner. Captain C. Tuckey, of the Cutter "Jessie," engaged in the pearl fishing, on his voyage from Roebourne to Fremantle, put in near the Nor'-West Cape to land some native divers belonging to that locality, who had been engaged in the pearling. After landing them, the "Jessie" proceeded on her voyage, but the weather getting rough, the captain thought it as well to run in towards the land and anchor in smooth water till the weather abated. Having anchored in a protected spot, Tuckey determined to send some flour and sugar ashore to the natives with a view to establishing friendly relations with the tribes thereabout, in the event of his wanting to engage them at any future-time for the pearling. While pulling on shore in the ship's boat, one of the hands remarked that there were two malays on the beach with the natives; on landing they proved to be the two survivors of the crew of the "Stefano," and from them Captain Tuckey learnt the sad tale of the loss of the ship and the sufferings of the crew. He brought them to Fremantle, and informed the proper authorities of what had occurred; the two men are staying with Captain Vincent of the "Rosette." The natives made no reference to their having had any previous acquaintance with white men during the time these young men remained with them.—*Herald*